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### Bond Release Findings

**Mine Name:** Wilson/Silverbell Mine  
**Operator:** Umetco Minerals Corporation  
2754 Compass Dr. Ste. 280  
Grand Junction, Colorado 81506-8788

**I.D. No.:** M/037/027  
**Mineral Ownership:** Fee  
**Surface Ownership:** Fee  
**Permit Term:** 1979

**Disturbed Area:** 45 Acres  
**Regraded:** 45 Acres  
**Reseeded:** 45  
**Acres Bonded:** 45 Acres

**Acres Proposed for Release:** 38.1 acres proposed for full release, 6.9 acres proposed for release from all but revegetation requirements

#### Surety

**Amount:** \$142,280

**Form:** Board Contract

**Renewable Term:** 5 years (1985 dollars)

#### **Setting and Premining Environment**

This site is near the Colorado border northeast of Monticello. It is in an area where dryland bean, grain, and safflower farms are mixed with pinyon/juniper woodlands. Soils are silty and sandy loams and are somewhat erosive. The general topography is gently rolling, and the postmining land uses are grazing and farming.

#### **Operations**

The operation began some time prior to 1975, and the last reported mining was in 1990. Reclamation was completed in 2000. The operator mined uranium and vanadium using random room and pillar methods. Surface facilities included shop, warehouse, and office buildings; two shafts; eight vent holes; power lines; evaporation ponds; and waste piles. Limited topsoil was saved during operations, but the operator was able to acquire topsoil as the site was reclaimed.

#### **Hole Plugging**

The vent holes were not cased. The operator filled the holes with mine waste to within 10 feet of the surface, waited three months for the waste to settle, then poured a five-foot concrete cap and filled the remainder with soil.

#### **Reclamation**

The site was mostly reclaimed in 2000 with some power pole removal and additional seeding being done in subsequent years. The operator dug large trenches next to the waste piles and pushed waste into these holes. The material pulled from the trenches was used as topsoil over the waste piles. These areas were then pocked and seeded. Some facilities, including an access road, three buildings, two ponds, a well, and a compressor with a pad, have not been reclaimed. The operator has yet to receive approval for leaving the well and compressor, but these facilities no longer belong to the operator; they have been taken over by the land owner.

Although the same methods were used on both waste piles, vegetation has not become well established on the Wilson pile. The operator is not seeking revegetation release for this area. The Wilson pile has been seeded three times.

**Mine Engineering**

Since these were underground mines accessed by shafts, there are no steep slopes or highwalls. The steepest slopes on the waste piles are less steep than 3h:1v.

All shafts and vent holes have been sealed.

The Division received and approved a request from the operator that certain facilities be retained for the postmining land use of livestock grazing. This was done at the request of the land owner. The facilities that were left include the east access road, shop, dry room, office, two ponds south of the Wilson Shaft, and the power line and access road to the ponds.

A well and a compressor and associated pad and building have not been reclaimed but are no longer the property of the operator. The Division has not approved these facilities remaining for a postmining land use.

**Hydrology**

There are no perennial drainages in the area, and even ephemeral drainages are small and insignificant. There has been a very limited amount of erosion on the sides of the reclaimed waste piles, but sediment has remained near the waste piles and has not left the site. Ponds have either been reclaimed or will be used for the postmining land use.

**Revegetation**

The remaining facilities will support the grazing and farming postmining land uses. The revegetated areas would support grazing but would not be conducive to farming.


Vegetation cover in those areas proposed for full release was estimated by the Division to be 45 percent, and cover in nearby undisturbed areas is about 34 percent. This meets the release criterion. This vegetation has survived four full growing seasons. On the Silverbell waste pile, most of the vegetation consists of grasses, both native and introduced, but much of the cover in the reclaimed ponds area is from fourwing saltbush.

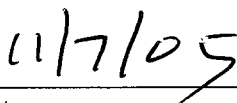
There are areas within the permit and adjacent areas that are infested with Russian knapweed, and the operator has been actively trying to control this noxious weed. State law requires land owners to attempt to control noxious weeds, so these control efforts should continue following release. Most owners of nearby land are also making control efforts.

**Recommendation**

The operator needs to either reclaim the remaining well and compressor with its associate pad and building, or the operator needs to request that these facilities remain for a postmining land use.

Except for these facilities and the waste pile at the Wilson Mine, the operator has met release criteria for this site. It is recommended that the Division sign the reclamation contract submitted by the operator May 16, 2005. Once the issues with unreclaimed facilities have been resolved, the operator will need to request that the Board release the operator from the Board Contract.

  
Inspector

  
Date